

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 002612

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2010

TAGS: [EU](#) [IZ](#) [NL](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH FM-DESIGNATE SAYS TIES TO U.S. A TOP PRIORITY

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMB CLIFFORD SOBEL FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) On October 10, FM-designee Ben Bot met with Amb. Sobel. Bot said he is committed to building upon the strong U.S.-Netherlands foundation that FM de Hoop Scheffer and PM Balkenende have set, including using the 2004 Dutch EU presidency to strengthen transatlantic relations. He expressed particular gratitude for the Secretary's October 3 phone call, and said he would work closely and creatively with the U.S. embassy to "get results" from the U.S.-Dutch partnership.

2. (C) Bot said that the French government has asked the GoNL to join what he called ongoing discussions among France, Germany and the UK to reconcile differences over security policy. The goal, he said, is to find a way to realize European aspirations without harming NATO or transatlantic interests. The ambassador raised the urgent need for more assistance to Iraq. Bot gave every indication that he thought he could wrest more money out of his government, but that it would take time and a focused effort. He said Dutch business wants the GoNL to play a bigger role, assuming that would enhance their chance of getting contracts. He also said the Dutch need to become more aware of the humanitarian need in Iraq. With a tight budget, most Dutch, including in parliament and the developmental community, see Iraq as a lower humanitarian priority than Africa, for example.

3. (C) Bot expects to be sworn in mid-day December 3, one day after the end of the OSCE ministerial, which FM de Hoop Scheffer will chair. Bot indicated that he would be delighted if it were possible to meet with the Secretary in The Hague on December 3 before traveling to the NATO ministerial. He indicated that he would be out of The Hague for most of December, but expressed an interest in going to the United States as soon as possible in 2004 to make clear the priority of the Dutch-U.S. relationship.
SOBEL